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THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

At the recent congress of the American Ornithologists' Union, in New York City, November 11, distinction was conferred upon three Pacific Coast men. Joseph Mailliard was elected Fellow, and W. Lee Chambers and George Willett were elected Members. Mr. Mailliard's election is the first to the class of Fellows, as far as this coast is concerned, since that of Walter K. Fisher in 1905.

Mr. L. E. Wyman, recently of Nampa, Idaho, has removed to Los Angeles, where he is in charge of the work of excavating the fossils at the Rancho La Brea, for the Museum of History, Science and Art.

The Cooper Ornithological Club has been honored through the appointment of Mr. George Willett of Los Angeles as Inspector under the new Federal Migratory Bird Law. In explanation it may be said that the plan worked out by Dr. T. S. Palmer and those others of the Department of Agriculture in whose hands rests the administration of the law, involves the division of the United States into thirteen districts, each to be in charge of an experienced inspector and a force of about 25 picked men selected by the state game commissions. The California District, of which Mr. Willett is to be Inspector, includes also Nevada and Arizona. The task of putting the new law into effect concerns every State in the Union and is one of the greatest ever attempted in the history of game protection. We congratulate Mr. Willett upon his appointment, and wish him all success in his new office.

The friends of Mr. Joseph Dixon are much concerned over his failure to return home this fall from his Alaskan trip, as expected. It is now practically certain that the *Polar Bear*, the vessel in which Dixon's party was exploring the arctic coasts of Siberia and Alaska, has been frozen in for the winter somewhere east of Point Barrow. No word is likely to be received from the party before the ice breaks up, next July or August. Dixon will certainly have abundant opportunity to study and collect whatever animal life is available around his winter quarters. It is to be earnestly hoped that no mishap or extraordinary hardship overtakes his party, and that he returns to us in due time with sufficiently valuable results to compensate him for his long and involuntary isolation.

Attention of all Cooper Club members is hereby directed to our Business Managers' announcements on inside front cover of this issue. Material and prompt response to their requests is recommended as being in line with the continued success and activity of the Club and its publications.

The Biological Survey announces with deep regret the death of Major John Fletcher Lacey, a member of the Advisory Board on Migratory Birds. According to press dispatches, Major Lacey's death, due to apoplexy, occurred on September 29, 1913, at the age of 72, at his home in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

During the sixteen years in which he served in Congress, 1889 to 1891, and 1893 to 1907, he was connected with most of the measures relating to conservation. One of the earliest statutes which he assisted in passing was the Act of May 7, 1894, protecting birds and animals in the Yellowstone National Park. As author of various bills protecting game he early became known as the "Father of Federal Game Legislation". Following are some of the more important measures for the protection of wild life which he introduced and which are now on the statute books: The act which bears his name, regulating interstate commerce in game, 1900; the first Alaska game law, 1902; the act creating the Wichita Game Refuge in Oklahoma, 1905; the appropriation for the herd of buffalo in the Yellowstone Park, 1905; the National Monuments Act, 1906; the law protecting birds on bird reservations, 1906.

During his chairmanship of the House Committee on Public Lands in 1904, he became deeply interested in the first bill for the protection of migratory birds, introduced by Hon. George Shiras. Later, after his retirement from Congress, he devoted considerable study to this question and proposed certain amendments in what is sometimes known as the Lacey Modification of the Migratory Bird Bill, introduced in the House by Hon. John W. Weeks on May 28, 1909.

His keen interest in game legislation continued after his retirement to private life and on at least two occasions he was actively interested in the passage of important measures. Early in 1909 he appeared before the Committee which codified the penal laws and

a few days before the bill passed took part in putting the finishing touches on the provisions of the Lacey Act incorporated in that Code. Later he took an active part in securing an increase in the appropriation for the maintenance of the buffalo herd in the Yellowstone Park.

In recognition of his interest in the protection of migratory birds he was recently appointed a member of the Advisory Board and was to have been present with other members of the committee at the hearing in Omaha on August 6, but was prevented by absence in California. Always interested in any measure for the conservation of wild life and ready to assist to the utmost of his ability, Major Lacey was a staunch friend of the Department, an earnest advocate of wild life conservation, and a singularly effective worker in this field. It is unfortunate that he could not have lived a few days longer to have learned the outcome of the measures for the protection of migratory birds and the plumage clause in the Tariff Bill, in which he was much interested.—T. S. PALMER, *Assistant Chief, Biological Survey*.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A REVISION OF THE GENUS *CHAEMEPELIA*. By W. E. CLYDE TODD. (*Annals of the Carnegie Museum*, VIII, May 8, 1913, pp. 507-603).

This is a careful and thorough revision of a difficult group of birds, and one leaving little to be desired in manner of treatment. The author had at his disposal "no less than nineteen hundred and twenty specimens of this genus, representing all of the known forms, and including a number of types", a quantity of material sufficing for a satisfactory solution of most of the problems involved.

Five species are recognized in the genus, *passerina*, *minuta*, *buckleyi*, *talpacoti*, and *rufipennis*. A sixth species, *Columba cruziana* Prevost and Knip, generally placed in the genus *Chaemepelia*, is here made the type of a new genus, *Eupelia*. *Chaemepelia* and *Eupelia*, with five other genera, are placed in the subfamily Claraviinae, corresponding to Salvadori's Peristerinae. *C. passerina* is divided into sixteen subspecies, *minuta* into two, *rufipennis* into two, while *buckleyi* and *talpacoti* each remains undivided. Three new South American subspecies of *passerina* are designated, *parvula* from central Colombia, *nana* from western Colombia, and *quitensis* from Ecuador; and *C. minuta elaeodes* is described from Costa Rica.

In the treatment accorded the North American forms of *C. passerina* certain changes are noted from the arrangement in the A. O. U. Check-List. The bird of the southeastern United States once more receives the name of *passerina*; *C. p. bermudiana*, of Bermuda, is relegated to the synonymy of *C. p. bahamensis*,

which is itself considered as but poorly differentiated from the Cuban bird.

The critical, detailed discussions of the various forms contain much that is interesting and suggestive, and will undoubtedly prove most helpful to future workers in the group. The exceedingly thorough bibliographical research carried out by the author has borne its fruits in the satisfactory solution of various nomenclatural puzzles of long standing.

The paper closes with a table of the average measurements of the various forms, and a list of the skins examined, with the source of each specimen.—H. S. SWARTH.

A STUDY OF THE NESTING BEHAVIOR OF THE YELLOW WARBLER (*Dendroica aestiva aestiva*). By HARRY C. BIGGLESTONE. (*Wilson Bulletin*, xxv, June, 1913, pp. 49-67, 5 tables).

In the *Wilson Bulletin* for June, 1913, is to be found a most notable article on the nesting behavior of the Eastern Yellow Warbler. The paper records observations made by Harry C. Bigglestone from a blind near the Macbride Lakeside Laboratory on Lake Okobogi, Iowa, during the summer of 1912. The nest was discovered before the set of eggs was complete and after hatching was watched continuously during hours of daylight until the young had flown. During the eight days involved the author received relief from other students in the laboratory at meal times and other periods of the day, thus lightening the tediousness of the task.

The patience displayed was certainly rewarded by the results obtained, for the reviewer can think of no paper which has furnished so much valuable information as to the details of the nesting behavior of any single bird. Even such minute details as the way in which the hatching bird frees itself from the shell and the time taken for this operation are recorded.

By marking the young warblers with colored strings tied about the leg, the author was able to keep track of the amount of food each was fed. Tables show the number of visits made by the parents, the distribution of food by days, and the distribution of food to the different nestlings. A total of 2373 visits with food were made, even though feeding was left entirely to the female during the last few days. The food was found to be made up entirely of insects, "green worms" being the largest item.

Under the heading of sanitation are recorded many interesting facts regarding the removal of excreta. For the first few days the parent birds usually ate the excreta, but later it was carried away. The egg-shells were all eaten. A table gives the total number of excreta sacs, together with their disposal.